

## References and Additional Resources

### Important CBT Information

Elbow, Peter, Writing Without Teachers, Oxford University Press, 1975

[www.12manage.com](http://www.12manage.com)

[grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar)

[owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu)

[wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop10g.cfm](http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop10g.cfm)

[www.azleg.state.az.us/ArizonaRevisedStatutes.asp](http://www.azleg.state.az.us/ArizonaRevisedStatutes.asp)

[www.barbaraminto.com](http://www.barbaraminto.com)

[www.writing.ucsb.edu/index.htm](http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/index.htm)

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## Introduction

For many people, writing can be an intimidating proposition. Nonetheless, there are times when writing is the best way to communicate.

Communicating through writing requires special attention because, once something is in written form, it cannot be taken back.

Writers face several challenges when putting ideas on the page. These include not only spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but also writing style and wording.



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## Introduction

Thankfully, today's technology makes writing much easier by providing reliable tools that check misspelled words and incorrect grammar. Unfortunately, these tools are not fail proof. This course will show you a 6-step process that will help you increase the quality of your written documents and will also explain Arizona's public records law for written documents and email.



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## Your Mission

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to write a 1 page, single spaced, 12 point font memo in which you describe one thing your organization could do to lower its operating costs. You will receive a grade for this course based on the writing quality of your memo. The minimum passing grade is 70 points.

Don't worry! We will give you all the tools you will need to write an excellent memo. However, you will need a pen and some paper for this course. Are you ready to accept this mission? Click the I Accept button to continue.

# BOOM!

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This completes the introduction chapter of this course. The next chapter will start you on a 6-step method of preparing and writing your document.

Click next to continue.

Chapter  
  
Complete

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## Your Writing Process

Think about the last letter or memo you had to write. List some of the steps you took to write the document in the box below. Click submit when you finish.

Submit



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## Your Writing Process

Did you have a hard time thinking about the process you followed to write your latest document? According to Purdue University, though most people engage in a writing process, they may not be conscious of the steps it entails.

People who have trouble organizing their thoughts struggle because they do not follow a consistent writing process.



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## Systematic and Consistent Method

Using a systematic and consistent method to write is important and it will:

- Help you organize your thoughts
- Help you avoid frustration and procrastination
- Help you increase the quality of your writing
- Help you use your time productively and efficiently

The next sections of this course will focus on explaining the 6-Step Writing Process and will provide opportunities for you to use it as you write your money saving memo.



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## Proper Tools

Do you have everything you need to begin writing your money saving memo? Before you begin, ensure you have all the proper tools in one place.

List some tools you think you will need in the yellow box. Click submit when you finish.

Submit

1

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## Best Time

Choosing the right time to write is also important. Some people are more able to concentrate in the morning. Others can concentrate better in the afternoon. What other factors create the optimal writing time for you?

List some in the yellow box and click submit.

Submit

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## Writing Plan

Before you start thinking about what you are going to write, answer these 4 key questions:

- Why are you writing it?
- Who is going to read it?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- What issues do you intend to discuss?

You can easily remember them with the acronym P.A.R.I.



• Prepare

Purpose  
Audience  
Results  
Issues

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## Purpose

Why are you writing the memo? Write the purpose of your memo in the box below. Then click submit.

Submit



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## Audience

As you consider your audience, answer the following questions:

- To whom are you writing?
- What does your audience need to know about the topic?
- What do you want your audience to think, say, do?

Write your answers in the box then click submit.

Submit



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## Results

Think about the results you want to achieve.

- What do you want to happen short term?
- What long-term impression do you want to create?

Write your answers in the box below. Then click submit.

Submit



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## Issues

A few more important considerations...

- Is there any history on this topic that may affect how you write about it?
- Are there any political and/or emotional issues regarding this topic that you may want to consider?
- Are you providing good news? Bad news? Surprises?

Write some ideas in the box. Click submit when you are ready.

Submit

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## Summary

Now that you have...

- Prepared your TOOLS
- Chosen the RIGHT TIME
- Developed THE WRITING PLAN

You are ready to move to the second step in the writing process - Brainstorming.

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## OWL Website

Brainstorming is typically a group problem-solving technique in which members spontaneously share ideas and solutions to a problem. In the context of this course, we use it as a means to generate ideas. Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) recommends that you gather as many good and bad ideas, suggestions, examples, sentences, false starts, etc. as you can.

OWL also recommends that you talk to your audience, or pretend that you are being interviewed by someone — or by several people, if possible (to give yourself the opportunity of considering a subject from several different points of view). What questions would the other person ask? For more information about OWL, click on the button or click next to continue.

2

## • Brainstorm

[Take me to OWL's Website](#)

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## Money Saving Tip

Remember that money saving memo you'll be writing? Brainstorm some ideas about some money saving tips you might have for your organization. Write them in the yellow box below and click submit when you are done.

2

## • Brainstorm

[Submit](#)

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## Clustering

Another technique you can use to generate ideas is called "Clustering". Clustering is similar to brainstorming in that, as you jot down ideas on a piece of paper or on a whiteboard, you mustn't allow self-censorship to intrude and say that your idea (or anyone else's) is dumb or useless. Write it down anyway. In Clustering, you jot down only words or very short phrases.

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## Clustering

Don't bother to organize too neatly, though, because that can impede the flow of ideas. Don't cross anything out because you can't tell where an idea will lead you. When you get a few ideas written down, you can start to group them, using colored circles or whatever. Draw linking lines as connections suggest themselves.

It's really easy. Want to see how it works? Click on the button below to see an example used to write a Cause and Effect Paper on the weather phenomenon known as El Niño.

Think again about the money saving memo. On a piece of paper, jot down and cluster some ideas. Click next when you are ready to move on.

2

### • Brainstorm



Show me a clustering example

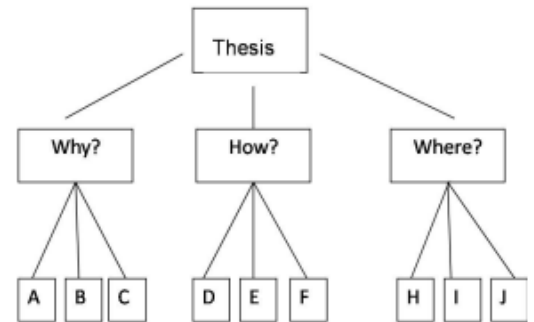
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## Organize

Once you have all these ideas, it's time to organize them. One way of organizing your ideas is using the Minto Pyramid Principle. According to Barbara Minto's website, "your thinking will be easy for a reader to grasp if you present the ideas organized as a pyramid under a single point (thesis)."

### 3 • Organize



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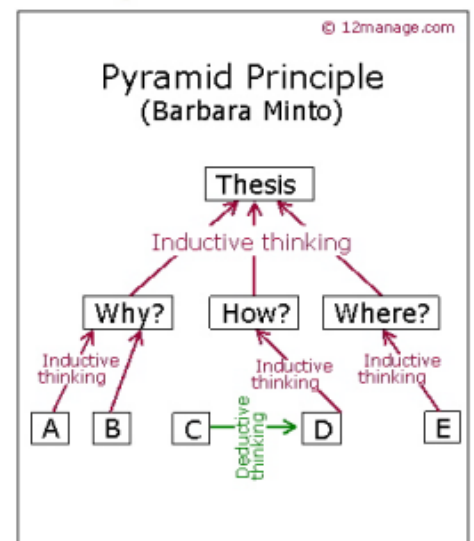
## Group Ideas

12Manage.com goes on to explain that "the core of Minto's thinking method is to group ideas in small clusters that support the main thesis in increasing detail."

Furthermore, supporting arguments can be based on Inductive Reasoning (thinking process in which the premises of an argument support the conclusion but do not ensure it) and Deductive Reasoning (thinking process in which the conclusion is necessitated by previously known facts. One element logically leads to the next).

The best way to make any point or argument, says Minto, is to structure the thinking in this way.

### 3 • Organize



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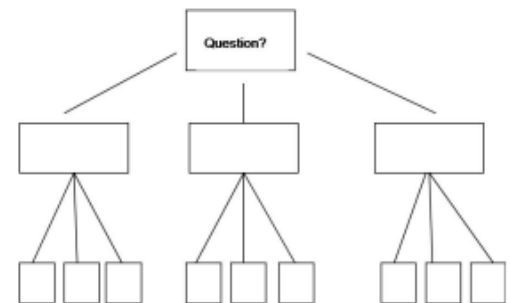
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## Practice

Time for practice. On a piece of paper, organize the clusters you developed earlier for your memo using the pyramid model as shown on the right. Each level of information should answer a new question raised in the level above it.

After you organize the clusters, you will be ready to move to the next step and begin writing.

### 3 • Organize



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## Write

Now that you have some general ideas about what you would like to write, it is time for you to begin putting those ideas into sentences. For this process, we recommend you use a technique called "free writing". This technique was made popular in the 70's when it appeared in a book called *"Writing Without Teachers"* by Peter Elbow.

### 4 • Write

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## Write

According to the book, free writing (also known as stream-of-consciousness writing) is a writing technique in which a person writes continuously for a set period of time without regard to spelling, grammar or topic.

The method produces raw material that is often used as a preliminary to more formal writing. Click on the button below to learn more about free writing or click next to move on.

[Free Writing Guidelines](#)

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## Practice

Your turn. On a blank piece of paper, take 5 minutes to free write the first paragraph of your memo.

You can use an online stopwatch to keep track of the time by clicking on the image of the alarm clock.

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## Edit

Well done. Now that you have a rough draft of your 1st paragraph, begin editing what you have just free written. Go over your draft and correct all the errors by giving careful consideration to spelling, punctuation and grammar, content, style, tone, word choice, and flow; making sure there is a smooth transition from one idea to the next.

Continue going through the free writing/editing cycle of the process to finish your memo. Click next when you are ready to move on.

[More Information on Transitions](#)

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## Proofread

So far so good! Now it is time for the final step in the writing process: Proofreading. Before we continue, please transcribe the draft of your memo to a Word® document on your computer and save it.

Once you have transcribed it, re-read it and make further corrections such as taking out type, adding type, replacing wrong characters with right ones, changing typeface or type style, changing the spacing or position of type, etc.

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## Proofread

Becoming a good proofreader takes practice. Here are some techniques you can use to proofread your document:

- Ask someone else to read your document
- Take a break between writing and proofing
- Read the paper aloud
- Do a line proof - run a blank piece of paper down one line at a time as you proof
- Check for spelling by reading the document backwards
- Check for wordiness, redundancy, ineffective repetition of words or phrases
- Replace slang, clichés with fresher images or words
- Use grammar/spell checker software, but do not rely on it

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## Public Records

The last section of this course regards Arizona's public records law for written documents and email. The purpose of this segment is to ensure you are able to:

- Distinguish between items that are clearly public records and those that are confidential
- Identify the circumstances under which records can be made available to the public
- Identify what to do if asked for a public record
- Recognize the appropriate disposition of public records



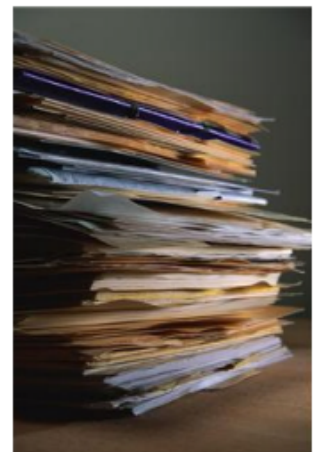
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## Public Records

As a government employee, it is important that you adhere to all statutes and, yes, there are statutes regarding communication through writing.

According to Arizona Revised Statute 39-121, "Public records and other matters in the custody of any officer shall be open to inspection by any person at all times during office hours." The public records statute seeks to increase public access to government information and to make government agencies accountable to the public. This means that everything that you create or receive at work could potentially be a public record.



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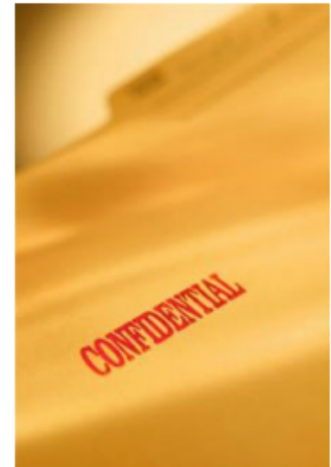
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## Public Records

However, the custodian of public records may deny inspection of the records when:

- The record is made confidential by statute, or
- The record involves the privacy interests of persons, or
- Disclosure would be detrimental to the best interests of the State

Also, all public records are State property. No record, even email, internal memos or casual correspondence created on the job can be disposed of arbitrarily. They are public records.



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## Using Technology

Using technology to communicate through writing creates new challenges. It requires new skills and rules of engagement. Generally, use email to convey facts; use verbal communication to convey feelings or emotions.

Do not use email if:

- Your message is confidential. Email is not secure
- You are delivering bad news. Do this in person, or use the telephone
- Your message may be misunderstood. If there is any chance your email could be misunderstood, do NOT send!
- You need an immediate response

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This completes the public records chapter of the course.  
The next section is the final exam.

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